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Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

20 August 1985

The Honorable Edward C. Aldridge, Jr.
Director, National Reconnaissance
Organization
Department of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Pete,

Per our conversation, the Director wanted you to have this for suitable framing and retention in the NRO Office.

Sincerely,

25X1 [redacted]

Executive Secretary

Attachment: (original letter from the President)
As stated

25X1 [redacted]

25X1 [redacted]

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 18, 1985

Dear Bill:

Although I cannot be with you in person today, I did not want to miss the opportunity to join in honoring the people who have participated in Project CORONA for the past 25 years.

No words can adequately convey the respect and gratitude that I feel, and I am sure that all Americans would feel if they could know, of the dedication and selflessness of the people who have given so much to the security of the United States.

Through their work, I can request photographs of almost any area of the surface of the earth and have them in my hands in a matter of hours. It is a feat of which President Eisenhower and those before him could only dream. It was he who played the crucial role in the development of overhead reconnaissance. It was his commitment to and understanding of the vital contribution that reconnaissance could make to our nation's security that provided the impetus to this project 25 years ago.

During the Eisenhower Administration, a new generation of photo-reconnaissance technology was developed that radically changed the entire concept of intelligence gathering. Improved collection -- from reconnaissance balloons to satellites -- has resulted in our acquiring an ever-increasing volume of detailed intelligence crucial to our national security and that of our allies.

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President Eisenhower once said to the grand old man of this business, General George Goddard, that without aerial reconnaissance: "...you would only have your fears on which to plan your own defense arrangements and your whole military establishment. Now, if you are going to use nothing but fear, ...you are going to make us an armed camp." His statement is no less true today. The knowledge which only overhead reconnaissance can provide is absolutely vital to the security of the United States.

I know that if President Eisenhower could see the fruition of his dream he would feel the same pride and admiration that I do for the people of Project CORONA and join me in extending to them heartfelt thanks for their service and dedication to our country.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

The Honorable William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

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